

In Memory of
U.S. Army Private First Class

Leon Dean Biesheuvel

Corsica, South Dakota
Douglas County

May 4, 1931 – October 7, 1952
Killed in Action in Korea



Leon Dean Biesheuvel was born on May 4, 1931, the only son of Dick and Florence (Ruesink) Biesheuvel in Corsica, Douglas County, South Dakota. Leon attended Douglas County rural elementary schools. Leon farmed with his father prior to entering the service. One memory of Leon is that he had a “cool car with fender skirts, sun-visor, and a very long antenna with a raccoon tail on top.”

Private First Class Biesheuvel was drafted into the army in 1951. He was trained at Fort Riley. He was then sent overseas to Korea in July of 1952 as part of the 108th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division.

Private First Class Biesheuvel died on October 7, 1952, in North Korea while fighting the Chinese. He was twenty-one years old. The *Corsica Globe* reported that Pfc. Biesheuvel had only been on the front lines for about eight days before his death.

His remains were returned to Corsica, South Dakota under military escort and laid to rest at the Graceland Cemetery. He received the Purple Heart, the Korean Service Medal, and the United States Service Medal.

Right before Leon left for service in Korea, he told his parents that he wanted to make the army his career. When his parents received the word of his death, they decided that he had done just that. Although Leon was the only child of Dick and Florence, they later took in the 13-year-old daughter of Dick’s brother, Erwin, when he died. Raising her and mentoring other young families in their community was a source of comfort for them after losing their beloved son, Leon.

This entry was respectfully submitted by Jessica Gallagher and Katie Heggem, 8th grade, Spearfish Middle School, Spearfish, South Dakota, May 21, 2004. Information for this entry was provided by the South Dakota National Guard Museum, *Corsica Globe*, and Gene and Leola Ligtenberg, Rapid City, cousins of Pfc. Biesheuvel. Profile approval by Gene Ligtenberg.